

Immunizations Are Preventive Care for All Ages

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the U.S., vaccination programs have eliminated or significantly reduced many vaccine-preventable diseases. Even so, some of these diseases still exist and may once again become common — and deadly — if we don't get the vaccinations we need and when we need them.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month and OAOHN would like to encourage you to care for yourself and your loved ones by reminding you of the importance of immunizations as preventive care.

Immunizations aren't just for youngsters. The CDC says we all need them to help protect us and our patients and coworkers from serious diseases and illness. In fact, according to the CDC, everyone over age six months needs a seasonal flu shot every year. The seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.

Other vaccinations work best when they are given at certain ages. Here are some general guidelines from the CDC:

Young children:

- Children under age six get a series of shots to protect against measles, polio, chicken pox, and hepatitis.

Preteens:

- All 11- and 12-year-olds need shots to help protect against tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, and meningitis.
- Doctors recommend girls also get the HPV vaccine to protect against the most common cause of cervical cancer.

Adults:

- All adults need a tetanus shot every 10 years.
- People age 65 need a one-time pneumonia shot.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about which shots you and your family need.

Besides preventing you and others from getting sick, there's another great benefit associated with getting immunized. Most immunizations are 100 percent covered by your health insurance as preventive care. For a complete list of immunizations and a schedule for receiving them, visit the [CDC Immunization Schedules](#) website.

To ensure vaccines are held to the highest standard of safety and efficacy, the CDC has measures in place to test and continuously monitor them. To learn more, visit the [CDC Vaccine Safety website](#).

Having a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who can coordinate your care, including preventive care and immunizations, is vital to your good health. A PCP typically specializes in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or General Practice. If you don't have a PCP, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.